



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

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Date: December 5, 2003

Bernie Ryan  
Forest Manager  
Mescalero Agency, BIA  
P.O. Box 189  
Mescalero, NM 88340

Dear Mr. Ryan:

On November 18-20, we remeasured the dwarf mistletoe monitoring plots in the Whitetail A & B project area. These plots, which contain a sample of over 1200 ponderosa pine seedlings and saplings, were designed to monitor the development of latent infection in young natural regeneration. Their primary objective was to help determine and document the need for follow-up treatment in this (and many similar) project areas at Mescalero. Earlier results were summarized and discussed in our report R3-02-02.

We found that only four additional trees had developed visible infection since the previous remeasurement in 2001. (Note that all visibly infected trees within and adjacent to the plots have been cut or pruned periodically to prevent spread). No new infections were found on six of the nine plots. The four new infected trees represent about two percent of all latent infections (177 total) that developed on these plots since the 1991-92 treatment. Trends indicate that very few (if any) additional infections can be expected. Cumulative results show that latent infections appear at a fairly constant rate for about six years following treatment, then taper off and probably cease by around year ten.

By now, these plots have yielded most of their intended practical and scientific information. The Agency may now want to proceed with a follow-up treatment to remove infected, excess, and damaged trees in the Whitetail A & B project area. Much of the remaining infection is located in the northern portion of the unit, where larger saplings (and a few older trees) were retained in the original treatment.

This long-term monitoring effort has indicated that about 80% of latent infections become visible within six years of treatment. The four new infections are believed to represent the longest latent period (at least nine years) ever documented for ponderosa pine dwarf mistletoe. Results confirm the desirability of follow-up sanitation five or six years after patch clear-cut treatment, followed by additional sanitation and stocking control five to ten years later.



The interest and support from the Mescalero Agency in this monitoring effort is appreciated. Clay Garrison's assistance was especially helpful during the recent remeasurement.

Sincerely,

/s/ David A. Conklin  
DAVID A. CONKLIN  
Forest Pathologist  
Forest Health, New Mexico Zone

cc: Bev Schwab, SW Regional Office, USDI-BIA